

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. PORTUGAL

A. LEFTISTS STILL STRONG IN OPORTO

OPORTO WAS CALM OCTOBER 9 AFTER A NIGHT OF CLASHES BETWEEN PPD SUPPORTERS OF COMMANDER VELOSO AND LEFTIST SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS RESISTING HIS ATTEMPTS TO ENFORCE DISCIPLINE. THE RADICAL SOLDIER'S ORGANIZATION (SUV) REMAINED IN CONTROL OF AN ARTILLERY REGIMENT NEAR THE CITY.

EMBASSY COMMENT:

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--WHILE ANTI-LEFTIST SENTIMENT RUNS DEEP IN NORTHERN

PORTUGAL, THE RADICALIZED TROOPS AND THEIR CIVILIAN ALLIES ARE SUCCESSFULLY RESISTING THE PRESSURE.

--NEITHER COSTA GOMES NOR AZEVEDO HAS TAKEN A STAND ON THE OPORTO INCIDENTS IN THE APPARENT HOPE THAT VELOSO CAN BRING THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL HIMSELF.

MEANWHILE AN OCTOBER 7 ENLISTED MEN'S MEETING IN LISBON, ATTENDED BY ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF FABIAO AND COPCON COMMANDER CARVALHO, RESOLVED TO STRENGTHEN "AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATIONS

OF ENLISTED MEN AS A CLASS." THE RADICAL MILITARY'S STRATEGY IS TO RECOUP AFM AND REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL LOSSES BY COURTING THE LOWER RANKS.

B. AIR FORCE CHIEF REQUESTS US ASSISTANCE

THE PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE (PAF) CHIEF OF STAFF HAS ASKED EMBASSY LISBON FOR US ASSISTANCE "TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE AIR FORCE." HE PROPOSED:

--EXCHANGING TWO PAF 707'S, WHICH WILL BECOME SUPERFLUOUS AFTER THE ANGOLAN DECOLONIZATION, FOR FOUR US C-130'S, WHICH, BEING MORE VERSATILE, ARE USEFUL AS CARGO AIRCRAFT;

--UTILIZING US AIRCRAFT TO MOVE TWO PAF PUMA HELICOPTERS TO THE AZORES.

THE PROPOSALS ARE DESIGNED TO HELP CREATE A VIABLE RAISON D'ETRE FOR THE PAF IN THE POST-ANGOLA PERIOD. LEFTISTS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, BACKED BY COSTA GOMES, HAVE PROPOSED ABOLISHING THE PAF AS A SEPARATE SERVICE.

EMBASSY COMMENT: THE PROPOSALS ARE WORTH CONSIDERING. IF THE PAF, THE MOST CONSERVATIVE BRANCH OF PORTUGAL'S ARMED SERVICES, IS ABOLISHED, THE LEFT WILL HAVE SCORED A SIGNIFICANT VICTORY.

C. BREACH BETWEEN ORGANIZED LABOR AND GOVERNMENT CONFIDENTIAL

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MINISTER OF LABOR TOMAS ROSA BLUNTLY ATTACKED THE LEADERSHIP OF THE METAL WORKERS UNION OCTOBER 8 FOLLOWING A DEMONSTRATION AGAINST HIM BY THE METAL WORKERS ON THE PREVIOUS DAY. ROSA WAS IN TURN VIGOROUSLY ATTACKED BY THE PRO-COMMUNIST PRESS FOR BEING "ANTI-WORKER". EMBASSY LISBON NOTES THAT THIS IS THE FIRST OPEN BREACH BETWEEN ORGANIZED LABOR AND THE GOVERNMENT SINCE THE APRIL 1974 REVOLUTION.

D. SOARES PLANS US VISIT

THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY HAS INFORMED EMBASSY LISBON THAT MARIO SOARES WOULD LIKE TO VISIT THE US BEFORE THE FEBRUARY 1976 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. SOARES WANTS TO CONFER WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS ON THE POSSIBILITIES FOR US ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGAL. (CONFIDENTIAL) LISBON 5979; 5972; 5985 AND 5990, 10/9.)

2. MOROCCO: HASSAN MODERATES TONE ON SAHARA

IN SHARP CONTRAST TO LAST WEEK'S SABRE RATTLING, BOTH KING HASSAN AND FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI HAVE ISSUED MODERATE PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE SAHARAN ISSUE, AVOIDING MILITARY THREATS AND PROMISING TO AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF UNGA AND ICJ DELIBERATIONS. ALTHOUGH THIS HAS REDUCED TENSIONS IN RABAT SOMEWHAT, THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS OF A SLACKENING OF GOM EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ITS MILITARY POSTURE ON THE SAHARA AND SOUTHERN ALGERIA BORDERS. (CONFIDENTIAL) RABAT 4840, 10/9.)

3. MRS. PERON TO RESUME OFFICE

MOST OBSERVERS WERE SURPRISED AND PERONIST ANTIVERTICALISTAS BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE OCTOBER 8 ANNOUNCEMENT THAT MRS. PERON WILL RESUME OFFICE OCTOBER 16. ALTHOUGH HER DIEHARD SUPPORTERS ARE EUPHORIC, ONE ANTIVERTICALISTA TOLD EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES THAT "IF MRS. PERON IS INDEED FOOLISH ENOUGH TO REASSUME THE PRESIDENCY, SHE WILL BRING DOWN THE HOUSE ON ALL OF US."

EMBASSY COMMENT: IN THE PRESENT CONFUSED SITUATION MRS. PERON'S RETURN MUDDIES THE POLITICAL WATERS EVEN FURTHER, CONFIDENTIAL

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ALTHOUGH SHE MAY INTEND TO REOCCUPY THE OFFICE FOR ONLY A FEW DAYS. (CONFIDENTIAL) BUENOS AIRES 6749, 10/9.)

4. TURKEY: ECEVIT ACCUSES US OF "INTERFERENCE"

OPPOSITION LEADER ECEVIT HAS PICKED UP THE CONGRESSIONAL DECISION TO LIFT THE US ARMS EMBARGO AS AN ISSUE IN THE LAST DAYS BEFORE THE OCTOBER 12 SENATE ELECTION. ECEVIT CHARACTERIZED THE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION AS A "CONDITIONAL LIFTING" AND THEREFORE AN INTERFERENCE IN TURKISH INTERNAL AFFAIRS. (CONFIDENTIAL) ANKARA 7609, 10/9.) KISSINGER

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